

U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)

PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION “HOT ISSUES” INFORMATION PAPER

SUBJECT: Office of Strategic Communication Restructuring

1. BACKGROUND:

The Office of Strategic Communication (formerly the Office of Communications and Marketing) is undergoing a substantial organizational redesign. While several key milestones have been completed there will be additional HR and administrative work to follow.

a. General Background:

- When OCM was created in 2009 its structure and strategic approach was never solidified.
- Between 2009 and present the office has had 7 Associate Administrators and the HR and administrative requirements have been challenging for the leadership to complete during their tenure.
 - In 2016 OCM hired a career Deputy Associate Administrator who is leading the restructuring efforts which will allow those efforts to continue into, during and after the administration's transition.
- In 2012 GSA undertook a top-to-bottom review that recommended that all communications-related employees report to OCM instead of the program offices they were mapped to (PBS, FAS, regional offices, etc).
 - This was part of a larger effort to consolidate services such as GSA IT, CFO, HR, etc. the same way; creating enterprise-wide services as opposed to having these functions scattered across the agency and not formally connected.
- As a result, OCM grew from 45 to over 100 employees in 2014 with the bulk of the employees located in regional offices.
- During the consolidation of communications people and functions into OCM, the OCM leaders responsible for the transition left the agency, and the plans to integrate the employees stalled.
- This has affected staff and clients as there has not been a solid, focused, or collaborative approach for several years.
- In September 2016, the Administrator signed off on the a new organizational struction, mission and name. The new structure will align our staff in client teams that will connect better with our clients while providing technical expertise groups that will support their work in areas (video, web development, etc.)
 - The client teams will be based around the key business sections of the agency, Real Estate, Acquisitions, Technology and Policy. As well the client teams will be created in each region to continue to provide communications support and better align the enterprise efforts. These teams are designed to provide multi-facted communications and projects such as communications plans, web content, videos, graphics etc. By

developing such teams we are reducing the organizational and communications challenges that come from having employees in specialty organizations (client management, content, web, video etc.) instead of working in a team where the success of the client is its primary goal.

- The technical expertise teams will be responsible for ensuring the client teams have access to consistent tools and expertise to complete more complex projects in various areas. For example, the client teams will be responsible for creating and posting their own content on the GSA.gov website; however the web development team would assist when more complex pages or micro-sites are needed.

b. Issues:

- The restructure will require some training, new hires and employee development. These costs are reflected in our current budget forecasts.
- Due to the legacy of inconsistent service, employees will, in some cases, be transitioning out of traditional responsibilities (some of which may not have been included in their position descriptions or performance plans) which could cause discord for clients who relied upon these out-of-scope services.
- The realigned organization will create new processes and revise existing ones. The transition will require working closely with current contacts and a robust onboarding process for new staff to ensure work continues smoothly.

2. SCOPE AND EFFECT:

a. Impact on GSA's Customers:

- This will primarily affect the consistency of GSA staff office and services leadership having strong, strategic communication support.

b. Impact on the Private Sector and State & Local Governments:

- None expected

3. ACTION(S) PLANNED OR REQUIRED:

Long-term career leadership will need to be hired for the positions reporting to the Career Deputy.

- A combination of robust succession planning and career hiring for certain critical positions in press and engagement will be needed, for continuity of support to incoming leadership.
- A solid and consistent performance framework will need to be put in place for the new organization
 - Create better performance plans and position descriptions to help employees better understand when they've been fully successful
 - Enable OCM management to better monitor employee performance and deliver better feedback in support of performance improvement and recognition.
 - Develop client-facing metrics and activity reporting to better help clients understand how our office's work is helping them achieve their business goals and show how OCM be a more strategic partner in their success.

- The newly focused organization will need to bolster client relationships where we have them, and build them where we don't.
- Skills and capacity gaps will need to be assessed and addressed
- Additional conversations will be required with HSSOs to ensure we are meeting their needs on a broad scale.
- Employee engagement activities will need to be maintained and increased as employees will be affected by the changes in supervisors, responsibilities and client connections.

4. KEY STAKEHOLDER INTEREST:

- Heads of Services and Staff Offices
- Labor relations / GSA unions

5. FISCAL YEAR 2017/2018 BUDGET IMPACT:

Heading into FY18, the new organization has achieved a 14.5 percent savings on communication functions from pre-consolidation operations. Historically, OCM has seen attrition rates of nearly 20 percent and low hiring actions, a practice which continued until the organization had a clear mission and a clear sense of its role in the organization. The FY18 budget was developed based on this updated focus and structure. There is currently no expected need to require additional funding for operations, however, it is expected that OCM will fully utilize their training-related and FTE-related expenses.